Tolai language

The **Tolai language**, or **Kuanua**, is spoken by the Tolai people of Papua New Guinea, who live on the Gazelle Peninsula in East New Britain Province.

Contents

Tolai	
Kuanua	
Tinata Tuna	
Native to	Papua New Guinea
Region	Gazelle Peninsula, East New Britain Province
Ethnicity	Tolai
Native speakers	(61,000 cited 1991)[1] 20,000 L2 speakers
Language family	Austronesian • Malayo-Polynesian • Oceanic • Western • Meso-Melanesian • (St George linkage) • Patpatar–Tolai • **Tolai**
Writing system	Latin script (Tolai alphabet) Tolai Braille
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`ksd`
Glottolog	kuan1248 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kuan1248)[2

Nomenclature

This language is often referred to in the literature as *Tolai*. However, Tolai is actually the name of the cultural group. The Tolais themselves refer to their language as *a tinata tuna*, which translates as "the real language". *Kuanua* is apparently a word in Ramoaaina meaning "the place over there".

Characteristics

Unlike many languages in Papua New Guinea, Tolai is a healthy language and not in danger of dying out to Tok Pisin, although even Tolai suffers from a surfeit of loanwords from Tok Pisin, e.g. the original *kubar* has been completely usurped by the Tok Pisin *braun* for brown, and the Tok Pisin *vilivil* for bicycle has replaced the former *aingau*. It is considered a prestigious language and is the primary language of communication in the two major centers of East New Britain: Kokopo and Rabaul.

Tolai lost the phoneme /s/. For instance, the word for 'sun' in closely related languages of South New Ireland is *kesakese*, and this has been reduced to *keake* in Tolai. However, /s/ has been reintroduced through numerous loanwords from English and Tok Pisin.

Classification

Tolai belongs to the Oceanic branch of the Austronesian language family. The most immediate subgroup is the Patpatar–Tolai group of languages which also includes Lungalunga (also spoken on the Gazelle Peninsula) and Patpatar (spoken on New Ireland).

Geographic distribution

Tolai is spoken on the Gazelle Peninsula in the East New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea.

Derived languages

Tolai is said to be one of the major substratum languages of Tok Pisin. Some common Tok Pisin vocabulary items that likely come from Tolai (or a closely related language) include:

New Testaments in Tolai: *A Buk Tabu Kalamana Ure Iesu Karisito*: "The New Holy Book about Jesus Christ."

aibika (from *ibika*) - Hibiscus manihot
buai - betelnut
diwai (from *dawai*) - tree, wood
guria - earthquake
kawawar (from *kavavar*) - ginger
kiau - egg
lapun - elderly person
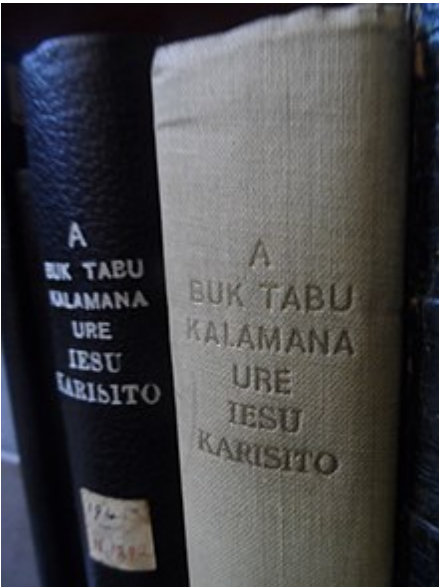*liklik* (from *ikilik*) - small
umben (from *uben*) - fishing net

Grammar

Phonology

Phonology of the Tolai language:[3]

Consonant sounds

		Labial	Alveolar	Velar
Plosive	voiceless	p	t	k
	voiced	b	d	g
Nasal		m	n	ŋ
Rhotic			r	
Lateral			l	
Fricative		β	s	
Approximant		(w)		

Vowel sounds

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

Vowel sounds can also be realised as [ɪ, ɛ, ʌ, ɔ, ʊ].

Independent pronouns

Tolai pronouns have four <u>number</u> distinctions (singular, dual, trial and plural) and three <u>person</u> distinctions (first person, second person and third person) as well as an <u>inclusive/exclusive</u> distinction. There are no <u>gender distinctions</u>.

	Singular	Dual	Trial	Plural
1st exclusive	*iau* (I)	*(a)mir* (he/she and I)	*(a)mital* (both of them, and I)	*avet* (all of them, and I)
1st inclusive	-	*dor* (thou and I)	*datal* (both of you, and I)	*dat* (all of you, and I)
2nd	*u* (thou)	*(a)mur* (you two)	*(a)mutal* (you three)	*avat* (you guys)
3rd	*ia* (he/she)	*dir* (they two)	*dital* (they three)	diat (they)

The plural pronouns lose their final -t when used before a verb. '**Da** vana!' - 'Let's go!', 'Pa **ave** gire.' - 'We didn't see.', '**Dia** tar pot' - 'They have already arrived.'

Syntax

The usual word order of Tolai is <u>SVO</u>.

Morphology

There is an irregular pattern involving the prefix **ni-**, which changes a verb to a noun. Ordinarily, the prefix is added to the verb, as in *laun* "to live" → *a **ni**laun* "the life", *ian* "to eat" → *a **ni**an* "the food", *aring* "to pray" → *a **ni**aring* "the prayer". However, in some cases it becomes an <u>infix</u> ⟨**in**⟩: *varubu* "to fight" → *a v**in**arubu* "the fight", *tata* "to talk" → *a t**in**ata* "the language", *mamai* "to chew betelnut" → *a m**in**amai* "(a small supply of) betelnuts for chewing". This infix is inserted after the initial phoneme of the verb. It could also be described as the prefix **ni-** being added as a prefix, and the initial phoneme of the verb changing places with the *n* of the prefix.

Notes

1. Tolai (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ksd/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Kuanua" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kuan1248). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

3. Franklin, Karl J.; Kerr, Harland B.; Beaumont, Clive H. (1974). *Tolai Language Course* (https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/3907) (third ed.). Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea: Summer Institute of Linguistics. ISBN 0-88312-207-3.

References

- Mosel, Ulrike (1984). *Tolai Syntax and Its Historical Development* (https://archive.org/details/tolaisyntaxitshi0092mose). Canberra: Pacific Linguistics. doi:10.15144/pl-b92 (https://doi.org/10.15144%2Fpl-b92). hdl:1885/145237 (https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F145237). ISBN 978-0-85883-309-8.
- Lynch, John; Ross, Malcolm; Crowley, Terry (2002). *The Oceanic Languages*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

External links

- Tolai Language Course (http://www-01.sil.org/pacific/png/pubs/92847453907/Tolai_Language_course.pdf)
- Language Museum page on Tolai (http://www.language-museum.com/encyclopedia/k/kuanua.htm)
- A number of collections in Paradisec include materials in Tolai (http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/search?language_code=ksd)